

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA  
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
RICK BOUCHER, VIRGINIA  
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK  
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY  
BART GORDON, TENNESSEE  
BOBBY L. RUSH, ILLINOIS  
ANNA G. ESHOO, CALIFORNIA  
BART STUPAK, MICHIGAN  
ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK  
ALBERT R. WYNN, MARYLAND  
GENE GREEN, TEXAS  
DIANA DEGETTE, COLORADO  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
LOIS CAPPS, CALIFORNIA  
MIKE DOYLE, PENNSYLVANIA  
JANE HARMAN, CALIFORNIA  
TOM ALLEN, MAINE  
JAN SCHAKOWSKY, ILLINOIS  
HILDA L. SOLIS, CALIFORNIA  
CHARLES A. GONZALEZ, TEXAS  
JAY INSLEE, WASHINGTON  
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN  
MIKE ROSS, ARKANSAS  
DARLENE HOOLEY, OREGON  
ANTHONY D. WEINER, NEW YORK  
JIM MATHESON, UTAH  
G.K. BUTTERFIELD, NORTH CAROLINA  
CHARLIE MELANCON, LOUISIANA  
JOHN BARROW, GEORGIA  
BARON P. HILL, INDIANA

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6115**

JOHN D. DINGELL, MICHIGAN  
CHAIRMAN

May 15, 2007

JOE BARTON, TEXAS  
RANKING MEMBER  
RALPH M. HALL, TEXAS  
J. DENNIS HASTERT, ILLINOIS  
FRED UPTON, MICHIGAN  
CLIFF STEARNS, FLORIDA  
NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA  
ED WHITFIELD, KENTUCKY  
BARBARA CUBIN, WYOMING  
JOHN SHIMKUS, ILLINOIS  
HEATHER WILSON, NEW MEXICO  
JOHN B. SHADEGG, ARIZONA  
CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING, MISSISSIPPI  
VITO FOSSELLA, NEW YORK  
STEVE BUYER, INDIANA  
GEORGE RADANOVICH, CALIFORNIA  
JOSEPH R. PITTS, PENNSYLVANIA  
MARY BONO, CALIFORNIA  
GREG WALDEN, OREGON  
LEE TERRY, NEBRASKA  
MIKE FERGUSON, NEW JERSEY  
MIKE ROGERS, MICHIGAN  
SUE MYRICK, NORTH CAROLINA  
JOHN SULLIVAN, OKLAHOMA  
TIM MURPHY, PENNSYLVANIA  
MICHAEL C. BURGESS, TEXAS  
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE

DENNIS B. FITZGIBBONS, CHIEF OF STAFF  
GREGG A. ROTHSCILD, CHIEF COUNSEL

The Honorable David M. Walker  
Comptroller General  
United States Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Walker:

We recently joined with our colleagues Chairman John Dingell and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' Chairman Bart Stupak to request that GAO assist the Committee's bipartisan oversight of Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) management of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and its related support programs. We write today to request additional examination of issues concerning waste, fraud, and abuse in the schools and libraries support mechanism, known as the E-rate program.


We make this request as a direct follow-up of the Committee's oversight of the E-rate program exercised during the 108<sup>th</sup> and 109<sup>th</sup> Congresses. In particular, this request would implement the recommendation in the bipartisan November 2005 staff report on the E-rate program, adopted by the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, that the GAO should continue its examination of the program, focusing on issues relating to the complexities posed by the FCC's organizational relationship with Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), to provide guidance to Congress and the FCC on questions that flow from this organizational structure. As the E-rate program approaches its tenth anniversary, such a review can also assist Congress by examining more fundamental issues concerning the program's long-term goals.

Given our past oversight of the E-rate program, we also believe it is important to continue focused oversight on the E-rate program and to take a fresh look at the specific trajectory of E-rate program support, and what this signifies about future issues that will confront the program. Accordingly, we write to request GAO assistance to address the following questions. Some of these items may be covered by, or fit within, other USF work you are developing for us and the Committee.

- What types of telecommunications services and technologies are funded by E-rate? What are the goals of the E-rate program and are they achievable?
- With regard to program structure and operations, and based on an objective analysis: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the E-rate program's structural organization?
- What has the FCC done to measure the effectiveness of E-rate support since GAO's February 2005 report to us? What has the FCC learned about the nature and scope of the telecommunications needs E-rate seeks to address? Does the FCC account for the current state of school technology in its analyses? To what extent does the wide range of eligible services meet the educational needs of the schools?
- What has the FCC done in response to GAO's February 2005 report to us? What findings and actions, relevant to GAO's recommendations, has the FCC produced and do they address adequately GAO recommendations?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you have questions please call Peter Spencer of the Minority Committee Staff at (202) 225-3641 on the specifics of your study.

Sincerely,



Joe Barton  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy  
and Commerce



Ed Whitfield  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations

cc: The Honorable John Dingell, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Bart Stupak, Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations